

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 07863

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG SU
SUBJECT: SUDAN FOREIGN POLICY IMPERATIVES

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 836, (B) STATE 57842

SUMMARY. GOE AFRICAN EXPERT AGREES WITH KHARTOUM ASSESS-
MENT OVER TACTICAL NATURE RECENT SUDANESE SEARCH FOR
ACCOMMODATION WITH NEIGHBORS. GOE SEES NUMAYRI BEING
INFLUENCED BY INTERNAL VULNERABILITIES, CHANGING ROLE
OF USSR AND U.S. AND DESIRE TO BE ACTIVE OAU PRESIDENT.
EXPERT CONCEDED SUDAN HAD NOT CONSULTED WITH GOE ABOUT
NEW MOVES. EGYPTIAN LEADERS CLEARLY APPREHENSIVE AT
NUMAYRI'S NEW INDEPENDENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MEETING MARCH 9, POLCOUNS COMPARED ASSESS-
MENTS OF RECENT SUDANESE FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS WITH
DIRECTOR MFA AFRICAN DEPARTMENT AHMAD SIDQI, IN
ACCORDANCE INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REF B. POLCOUNS DID
NOT REVEAL EMBASSY KHARTOUM AS SOURCE OF U.S. ASSESS-
MENT. IN GENERAL, SIDQI AGREED WITH KHARTOUM ASSESS-
MENT, PARTICULARLY NUMAYRI ANTIPATHY TO SOVIETS, QADHAFI
AND MENGISTU. SIDQI STRESSED THAT SUDANESE ACCOMMODA-
TION WAS PURELY TACTICAL AND THAT ALL CONCERNED (IN-
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CLUDING LIBYANS AND ETHIOPIANS) UNDERSTOOD THIS, BUT EACH
COUNTRY FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES, WAS WILLING TO PLAY THE
GAME.

2. SIDQI THOUGHT THERE WERE THREE MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS
PUSHING NUMAYRI IN NEW DIRECTION: (A) HIS OWN INTERNAL
VULNERABILITIES, INCLUDING DANGER OF RESURGENCE OF

SOUTHERN DISSIDENCE AND RESIDUAL FEAR OF ARMED ANSAR; ALONG SUDAN'S BORDERS; (B) RECOGNITION BY NUMAYRI THAT USSR HAS BECOME A MAJOR FORCE IN THE AREA ("INTERLOCATEUR VALABLE") WITHOUT WHICH NOTHING SIGNIFICANT CAN TAKE PLACE AND (C) NUMAYRI'S DESIRE TO SET STAGE FOR AN ACTIVE PRESIDENCY OF THE OAU PRIOR TO OPENING OF JULY 1978 OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM.

3. SIDQI DID NOT DWELL UPON NUMAYRI'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS BUT REITERATED MAJOR EGYPTIAN CONCERN ABOUT CHANGING NATURE OF SOVIET ROLE. SIDQI SAID SOVIETS ARE NOW THE DOMINANT POWER IN THE AREA AND HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF MAINTAINING AND INCREASING THEIR INFLUENCE, PARTICULARLY IN ETHIOPIA. IF MENGISTU SHOULD GET IN THE WAY OF THESE DESIGNS SOVIETS WILL SEE TO IT THAT HE REPLACED BY MORE PLIANT LEADER. SIDQI BELIEVES SOVIETS WANT TO TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO ERITREA BUT WILL BE IN NO HURRY TO END THIS INSURRECTION SINCE ITS CONTINUATION WILL JUSTIFY SOVIET-CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND FACILITATE SPREAD OF SOVIET INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

4. IN SHORT, SIDQI SEES NUMAYRI'S ACTIONS AS STRICTLY REALPOLITIK NECESSITATED BY CHANGING FORCES IN THE AREA, MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH ARE NEW ROLE OF USSR AND PASSIVENESS OF THE U.S. SIDQI CONCEDED THAT SUDAN HAD NOT "CONSULTED WITH" GOE ABOUT MOES TOWARD RAPPROCHEMENT
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WITH LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA, BUT RATHER HAD "INFORMED" GOE. GOE, REALIZING ITS OPINION NOT BEING SOLICITED, HAD NOT REACTED EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY. SIDQI IMPLICATION WAS, HOWEVER, THAT EGYPT WOULD APPRECIATE CLOSER CONSULTATION FROM SUCH A CLOSE ALLY. SIDQI WAS AWARE OF NUMAYRI'S CALL FOR ARAB SUMMIT, PUBLISHED THE PREVIOUS DAY IN BEIRUT AL SAYYAD, BUT NOTED NO CONCRETE STEPS YET TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT VAGUE CALL.

5. COMMENT. HIGH-LEVEL GOE OFFICIALS INCLUDING GAMASY, FONMIN KAMEL AND BOUTROS GHALI HAVE RECENTLY EXPRESSED CONFUSION ABOUT WHAT NUMAYRI IS ABOUT. GOE HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT CRITICIZING NUMAYRI, IN VIEW OF HIS CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE AND HIS CONTINUED ANTI-SOVIET STANCE. SEEMS CLEAR, HOWEVER, GIVEN FACT THAT MOST GOE LEADERS USED TO CONSIDER NUMAYRI A POLITICAL LIGHTWEIGHT AND THUS EXPECTED A CERTAIN DEFERENCE FROM HIM, EGYTIANS ARE NOW BIT PUT OFF BY, AND SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE AT, NEW INDEPENDENT COURSE NUMAYRI FOLLOWING. EILTS

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